

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES OF FORM FIVE ESL
STUDENTS IN SARAWAK**

LORETTA GEORGE AK WINKLE ENKASAN

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of
Master of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

November 2013

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

In the event that my dissertation be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate : Loretta George Ak Winkle Engkasan
Candidate I.D. No. : 2011409646
Programme : Master of Education (TESL)
Thesis Title : Learning Style Preferences of Form 5 Students

Signature of candidate: 

Date : November 2013

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the preferred learning styles of 120 Form 5 ESL students from English Language Centre (ELC) and SMK Muara Tuang (GS) as well as to investigate the relationship of learning style preference to students' proficiency level and to determine if there is a difference between students' preferred learning style to students' gender. A learning style refers to the ways of learning that include how learners perceive, interact with the respond to the learning environment. This study applied Reid's (1995) taxonomy of six learning style preferences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, and individual. This study employed a mixed-method approach. Quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, data was gathered from a sample of 120 Form5 students. Students were selected randomly according to their proficiency levels and gender. The students' learning styles were elicited using the Perceptual Learning Styles Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Joy Reid. Qualitatively, individual interviews were conducted with 9 students from English Language Centre and 9 students from SMK Muara Tuang. The interviews were used to triangulate students' choice of learning style preference. The study findings revealed respondents from both schools preferred the group learning style the most followed by kinesthetic learning style. The study found that there was significant difference in students' learning style preference and their proficiency level in ELC. The study also found that there was a relationship between students' learning styles and gender in ELC. The study concluded with the importance of understanding students' learning style preference. The study suggested the measures instructors should take into the consideration with regards to students' language learning style preference as well as academic performance and gender in order to obtain the a learning environment that would promote optimal learning and meeting students' expectations and needs in the classroom.

TABLES OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	Problem Statement	5
1.3	Objectives of the Study	6
1.4	Research Questions	7
1.5	Scope of the Study	7
1.6	Significance of the study	8
	1.6.1 To the Teachers	9
	1.6.2 To the Students	9
	1.6.3 To the School	9
1.7	Definition of Key Terms	10
1.8	Conclusion	11

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction to the study regarding learning style preferences. The problem statement is presented followed by the research objectives and research questions that the study seeks to answer. In addition, the scope and significance of the study is provided. Furthermore, this chapter includes the definition of key terms in the research.

1.1 Background of the Study

A good level of proficiency in English is one of the most important criteria in securing a job. According to Goh (2013), in *The Star*, SPM students fare better in Bahasa Malaysia than in English. The report also highlighted that for decades, the decline in English proficiency has been a serious concern to all and is one of the most reported problems in the media. Since 2006, poor English proficiency among fresh graduates has consistently ranked as one of the top five issues facing Malaysian employers. English is considered as an international language and it is a language that is widely used. Here in Malaysia, English is used in the media, business and is taught as a second language in schools from primary to secondary and in tertiary level.